

Thoughts on why we need thankfulness and gratitude no matter what

From the Blog of Michael Haldas

“Continual thankfulness in our hearts makes possible the second thing we can do to live as sojourners in this world. When I am thankful for my warm coat, I realize that there are people without warm clothes. When I am thankful for my home, I realize that there are homeless nearby living in a car, or a hovel, or in a temporary shelter. When I am thankful, the Gospel commands to pray, to control my consumption (fast) and to show mercy to others become much more than religious obligations, they become life for us.” (Fr. Michael Gillis)

“Rather than teaching children to handle life’s vicissitudes, we protect them. In the end, we are producing children who feel entitled to a prize just for showing up. How will these children ever feel grateful for the simple blessings of life? One who is entitled to clean air and healthy food and a good job and several trophies does not celebrate those blessings when they come — rather, they curse the unfairness whenever the blessings don’t appear. That kind of attitude makes for an unhappy life — and it has serious spiritual consequences.” (Elissa Bjeletich)

“The task of a Christian is to trust in the will of God, to be able to accept the circumstances of your life not just with submission to your fate, but ideally with gratitude. It is desirable to approach the tasks of life creatively, asking, “How can I benefit spiritually from this situation?” and not: “What have I done to deserve this?” (Bishop Euthymius Moiseyev)

“... if we experience involuntary suffering, then we do not complain but instead perceive that God has permitted it to us for our justification—that is, to put us right. It might be to put us right in this life in justice for sin, but it might also be to prevent us from becoming unjust and unrighteous, which then also makes possible our further perfection as it did with St. Paul. We can then be grateful not for the suffering as such, but rather grateful that God has given to us this opportunity for righteousness.” (Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick)

“The whole of this action, our grateful thanksgiving, always and for all things, in which we bear a little shame, unites us with the self-emptying life of Christ and becomes the gate of paradise and salvation. This is the very heart of repentance, and the secret of its joy... The giving of thanks, always and for all things, brings us face to face with Christ. To give thanks in the middle of our shame, is a primary means of “bearing” our shame. It embraces the fullness of Christ’s offering on our behalf, and unites us with that same offering. It is in the giving of thanks always and for all things that we find self-emptying as fullness. It is there that the Cross of shame becomes the “joy set before us.” (Father Stephen Freeman)